November 5, 2021

‘ARTIFICIAL’ — CATHY JAIN — EP REVIEW

When debut EPs are as bewitching as ‘artificial’ from 17-year-old Cathy Jain, you’re politely reminded that, while it might be November, the year isn’t done yet. Lots more excitement can still come between now and 23:59 on 31st December…

Image courtesy of Sonic PR

This youthful new artist is emerging to the fore with quite the arsenal of accolades. Cathy Jain was raised in China but moved to the UK when she was 13, and she’s done plenty in the time elapsed since. She’s recently signed with Felix White’s Yala! Records and has received a plethora of glowing feedback from NME, The Line of Best Fit, BBC Radio 1 and BBC 6Music, to name-drop a few. If you weren’t all ears before, I bet you are now…

Cathy Jain’s accustomed to utilising a bedroom recording setup and liaising with her primary producer at Cracked Analogue, who’s based in India. I mean, if that’s not a shining example of how the internet plugs logistical gaps, I don’t know what is.

So, here we have it: a four-track collection of R&B-tinged alt-pop. Think a generous measure of Billie Eilish vibes with a goodly dollop of Frank Ocean. Given that Cathy Jain’s also pitched these offerings as songs that *“take a look at how we define what is really ‘real’ [versus the virtual world]”*, I find it easy to glean some comparisons with Renforshort, too.

The major banger is the semi-lo-fi, trippy-sounding ‘cool kid’. It’s yielded decent radio airtime, with mentions from Annie Mac and Greg James. Jack Saunders also crowned it his ‘Next Wave’ pick when it was first released as a single. Pretty impressive stuff. Slick instrumentals have been softly kneaded into it as well.

The acoustic, gentle guitar riffs of ‘artificial’ are the next instalment on the tracklisting, which once again showcases Cathy Jain’s angelic feminine tones. She has an immensely addictive vocal quality that pairs so well with the low-key drum beats and piano keys.

The second half of the EP covers ground not yet trodden — this is the previously unreleased pair. The laid-back ‘green screen’ is a sleepy Sunday afternoon in style, with its easygoing pace. Then the quirky, experimental electronics that fade ‘i see us in heaven’ into full flow add another level of enjoyment, and the steady beat of this final song is really dreamy. It’s also a great way to round off an EP that royally whets the appetite for even more from the teen.

But for now, you can head to **Spotify** to listen for yourself. And Cathy Jain’s over on **Instagram**, too.

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